

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Distribution Administration
and
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau of Foods & Standards Cooperating

MARKET NEWS SERVICE ON FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

MARKETING THE MICHIGAN POTATO CROP
Brief Review of the 1942-43 Season

by R. E. Keller

Market reports on potatoes were issued from the Benton Harbor, Michigan office from October 12, to November 3, 1942, and from the Grand Rapids, Michigan office from November 2, 1942 to April 15, 1943.

National Situation

The national 1942 potato crop was estimated by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Crop Reporting Board, December 1, at 371,150,000 bushels compared to 355,602,000 bushels in 1941, and 370,045,000 bushels for the previous 10-year (1930-39) average. The crop in the thirty late States was placed at 298,054,000 bushels compared to 278,746,000 bushels for 1941 and 298,746,000 bushels for the 10-year average. The crop in the North Eastern and North Central group of States was about the same size as in 1941, but was under the 10-year average, while the crop in the Western States was above both the 1941 crop and the average.

Rail shipments for the 1942-43 crop to date, April 10, 1943, amounted to 204,548 cars as compared to 181,657 cars a year ago to date, and final 1941-42 shipments of 199,217 cars. A shift from truck to rail shipments accounted for part of this increase.

Michigan Situation

Michigan Crop Below Average Due to Smaller Acreage and Light Average Yields

Michigan's 1942 potato crop was estimated December 1 by the Crop Reporting Board at 16,562,000 bushels, a decrease from the 1941 harvest of 20,020,000 bushels and less than the 10-year average of 26,606,000 bushels. A sharp decrease in planted acreage occurred, with 1942 plantings being placed at 169,000 acres compared to 182,000 acres in 1941 and 280,000 acres for the 10-year average. Average yields were placed at 98 bushels per acre for this season, compared to 110 bushels per acre a year ago, and 95 bushels for the 10-year average.

Wet weather at planting time retarded planting in some areas. Summer weather was generally favorable for good growth. However, heavy rains in late August and September, especially in September, caused extensive blight damage. There was little damage reported from frost at harvest time. The labor situation was tight at digging time, and harvesting was made more difficult by frequent rains, but practically all stock was saved and placed under cover before snowfall.

Quality, Condition and Size

Quality of the 1942 harvest was variable. Fields showing blight damage had poor quality and condition, while fields well sprayed and fairly free from blight had fairly good quality. Sizes were medium to small. Damage from hollow heart, which is severe some seasons, was quite light this year.

Michigan Shipments by Rail and Truck

Shipments via rail and truck further verify the small 1942 Michigan potato crop. Rail forwardings through April 14 totaled 2,648 cars compared to 3,030 cars a year ago on the same date. Truck forwardings show a much sharper decrease, amounting to a total of 3,738 carlot equivalents on April 14, compared to 6,194 carlot equivalents a year ago on the same date.

Distribution of the 1942 crop was limited, with most stock going to nearby markets in Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana, with the bulk of stock going to Michigan points.

F.O.B. Situation

Prices Moderate until February - Good Balance of Season

Harvesting of late crop potatoes started around October 1. Many lots showing blight were sold immediately to avoid shrink. This distress selling caused stock to sell at levels of supply and demand, which was below ceilings established at this time. Terminal markets received liberal supplies of Maine and Western stock through November, December and January, at moderate levels. Michigan stock was discounted quite heavily due to variable quality. F.o.b. values showed moderate increase in November, December and January, but did not reach levels set by the OPA ceilings until February. Due to lack of regulation on seed stock, and strong demand at this time, f.o.b. prices moved beyond country ceilings for table stock almost immediately upon reaching this level. Values held strong through March to April 15, closing date of this office.

F.o.b. sales on a delivered basis for U. S. No. 1 Russet Rurals in 100-lb. sacks, ranged by months as follows: October \$1.50-1.70; November \$1.65-1.90; December \$1.85-1.95; January \$1.90-2.27; February \$2.15-2.45; March \$2.40-3.30, and April \$3.25-3.30.

F.O.B. Situation Normal from October through January - Confused and Upset Balance of Season

War-time restrictions, including OPA ceilings and ODT carlot loading regulations did not immediately effect directly the marketing of Michigan potatoes. Labor shortages made harvesting and loading slow and more costly. Temporary ceilings on potatoes established in October may have caused less stock to be stored. However, the principal factor governing sales at this time was that of blight damage. Many lots were disposed of immediately to avoid further shrink. Less stock was stored in track storages due to general blight damage, and if not sold, were mostly stored in farm cellars or pits. Permanent ceilings established in November for Michigan were above prevailing sales. F.o.b. sales did not reach ceiling levels until February. A shortage in national supplies developed in the West after the Army exercised priorities on the remaining Idaho crop. This caused a strong demand and increased values for Michigan stock. Rather chaotic conditions existed for the balance of the season. Little stock was sold at levels for country ceilings on table stock. Lack of ceiling regulations on seed caused much stock to be tagged seed.

Nearby demand from both terminals and small Michigan Markets was very strong. Demand exceeded supplies. Retailers, terminal buyers, truckers and peddlers, with 9 and 21% mark-ups, or retailer's mark-up, went direct to farmers and bought near their ceilings to secure supplies.

ODT restrictions increasing carlot loads from 360 bags to 450 bags was placed in effect in mid-December. Shippers were not sure how well stocks would carry with this heavier load, but little comment was heard of poor condition upon arrival due to this increase in loading.

A severe winter, with lots of snow, and with reduced road clearance programs caused farmers and shippers much trouble this season, in making deliveries and getting loads to market promptly.

Compulsory Federal-State Inspection was in effect during the 1942-43 season. Truck shipments and destinations were secured from the Inspection short forms.

Bags for sacking potatoes were high priced and supply limited, both on new and second-hand stock. However, supplies were sufficient for meeting demand.

ACREAGE HARVESTED, YIELD PER ACRE, AND PRODUCTION POTATOES 1/ BY STATES,
1942 SEASON WITH COMPARISONS

GROUP AND STATE	Acreage Harvested		Yield per Acre		Production	
	1930-39	1941	1942	Average:	1930-39	1941
	1,000 Acres				Bushels	
					1,000 bushels	

SURPLUS LATE POTATO STATES:

Maine	168	151	156	263	285	270	44,016	43,035	42,130	
New York	232	187	189	126	148	145	29,286	27,676	27,405	
Pennsylvania	207	165	157	120	130	112	24,924	21,450	17,584	
3 Eastern	607	503	502	161.6	183.2	173.5	98,226	92,161	87,109	
MICHIGAN	280	182	169	95	110	98	26,606	20,020	16,562	
Wisconsin	256	158	150	85	91	67	21,830	14,378	10,050	
Minnesota	307	206	204	76	78	95	23,088	16,068	19,380	
North Dakota	135	143	133	73	105	135	9,852	15,015	17,955	
South Dakota	43	29	32	53	60	88	2,300	1,740	2,816	
5 Central	1,021	718	689	82.3	93.6	97.0	83,674	67,221	66,763	
Nebraska	102	74	74	81	130	174	8,030	9,620	12,876	
Montana	20	14	15	90	110	115	1,774	1,540	1,725	
Idaho	114	122	133	224	225	230	25,505	27,450	30,590	
Wyoming	26	15	13	83	150	190	2,179	2,250	2,470	
Colorado	99	67	74	143	187	230	14,151	12,529	17,020	
Utah	13.4	11.2	12.5	152	170	185	2,021	1,904	2,312	
Nevada	2.5	1.8	2.3	144	240	210	358	432	483	
Washington	49	42	39	170	210	200	8,344	8,820	7,800	
Oregon	45	35	36	151	205	200	6,762	7,175	7,200	
California	2.1	30.5	32	34	238	295	320	7,365	9,440	10,880
10 Western	501.9	414.0	432.8	153.5	196.0	215.7	76,190	81,160	93,356	
Total 18 Surplus										
Late	2,129.8	1,635.0	1,622.8	121.8	147.1	152.3	258,389	240,542	247,228	

OTHER LATE POTATO STATES:

5 New England	61.9	56.4	58.3	149.8	158.6	160.0	9,237	8,947	9,328
5 Central	345	259	258	86.7	110.8	114.7	29,771	28,696	29,596
2 Southwestern	8.3	6.1	6.5	75.7	92.0	138.8	629	561	902
Total 12 OTHER									
Late	415.2	321.5	322.8	95.9	118.8	123.4	39,637	38,204	39,826
30 Late States	2,545.0	1,956.5	1,945.6	117.5	142.5	147.5	298,716	278,716	298,054

INTERMEDIATE POTATO STATES:

Total 7 Inter-									
mediate	318.3	258.9	260.5	104.1	114.6	118.1	33,089	29,658	30,765
37 Late & Inter-									
mediate	2,863.3	2,215.4	2,206.1	116.0	139.2	144.1	331,116	308,404	317,819
EARLY POTATO STATES:									
Total 12 Early									
States	432.3	495.6	505	89.5	95.2	105.6	38,929	47,198	53,331
TOTAL U.S.	3,295.6	2,711.0	2,711.0	112.6	131.2	136.9	370,045	355,602	371,150

1/ - Except for California, the estimates shown for each State under a particular group cover the entire crop, whether commercial or noncommercial, early or late.

2/ -- Estimates shown for California under the surplus late States do not include the early commercial crop.

MICHIGAN TRUCK MOVEMENT (Months)	POTATOES (1942-43)	FEDERAL (1941-42)	STATE (1940-41)	INSPECTED (1939-40)
July	265	256	87	239
August	465	584	667	227
September	387	656	709	667
October	537	967	662	771
November	453	763	572	851
December	305	813	464	645
January	352	655	447	704
February	343	642	373	723
March	360	681	470	723
April		563	446	834
May		415	424	575
June		26	235	51
GRAND TOTALS	7,021	5,566	7,013	

PRIMARY DESTINATIONS TRUCK SHIPMENTS MICHIGAN POTATOES 1942-43 SEASON

(Figures compiled from Federal State Inspection short forms for period October 30 to April 15) --
State and City -- 100-lb. sacks ; State and City -- 100-lb. sacks ; State and City -- 100-lb. sacks

<u>Georgia</u>	<u>Michigan (Cont'd)</u>	<u>Michigan (Cont'd)</u>
Atlanta	175	Cedar Springs 330 Saginaw 13,271
		Charlotte 1,314 Saranac 60
<u>Illinois</u>		Chippewa Lake 260 Six Lakes 240
Chicago	22,172	Coopersville 662 Spring Arbor 1,483
Gilman	726	Detroit 194,509 Standish 274
Total	22,898	Edmore 720 Traunik 360
<u>Indiana</u>		Falmouth 100 Traverse City 2,069
Anderson	2,423	Flint 20,166 Trufant 84
Atwood	610	Ft. Custer 120 Vermontville 100
Auburn	240	Fremont 1,068 Wahjamega 180
Bloomington	2,885	Freeport 90 Ypsilanti 1,192
Brazil	953	Galien 3,357 Zoeland 150
Center Point	27	Grand Haven 300 Total 438,384
Elkhart	1,683	Grand Ledge 70
Elwood	354	Grand Rapids 74,313 <u>Maryland</u>
Ft. Wayne	12,840	Greyling 75 Annapolis 300
Gary	330	Hanover 100
Hartford City	2,090	Hart 170 <u>Minnesota</u>
Indianapolis	85,224	Hastings 120 Duluth 475
Kokomo	2,892	Holland 1,365
LaPorte	182	Houghton 68 <u>Mississippi</u>
Lynn	100	Ionia 480 Jackson 120
Marion	860	Ironwood 318
Michigan City	325	Jackson 9,202 <u>Ohio</u>
Montpelier	1,599	Kalamazoo 10,888 Adams Mill 240
Muncie	8,654	Lansing 36,629 Cincinnati 1,800
Pennville	530	Lapeer 710 Cleveland 370
Richmond	250	LeRoy 210 Columbus 450
Seymour	72	Linwood 120 Dayton 270
Shelbourne	200	Lowell 100 Deshler 6,811
South Bend	5,979	Lucas 45 Pomeroy 1,136
Sullivan	1,694	Ludington 445 Toledo 11,404
Terre Haute	1,554	McBain 400 Youngstown 490
Total	134,550	McBride 110 Total 22,971
<u>Kentucky</u>		Marion 180
Ashland	120	Martin 260 <u>Tennessee</u>
Bowling Green	1,360	Midland 100 Knoxville 870
Louisville	11,901	Milan 400 Nashville 200
Olive Hill	120	Milford 120 Total 1,070
Wolverine	16	Millington 5,763 <u>West Virginia</u>
Total	13,592	Mt. Clemens 480 Huntington 23,645
<u>Michigan</u>		Mt. Pleasant 160
Adrian	120	Morley 468 <u>Wisconsin</u>
Alamo	100	Muskegon 19,001 Fond du lac 237
Albion	220	Nashville 300 Green Bay 200
Alma	280	Nilcs 143 Jonesville 1,000
Alpena	75	Olivet 71 Manitowoc 387
Ann Arbor	228	Owosso 190 Marinette 100
Au Gres	140	Oxford 2,265 Milwaukee 5,132
Battle Creek	14,635	Pickford 50 West Bend 200
Bay City	4,833	Plainwell 160 Total 7,256
Belding	363	Pontiac 1,101 Unknown 119,025
Bellevue	70	Portland 100 TOTAL 784,461
Benton Harbor	4,170	Powers 100 TOTAL REDUCED TO CARLOT
Birch Run	200	Roe City 334 EQUIVALENTS 2,179
Bridgeport	211	Remus 100 (Previous to Oct. 30,
		Rockford 507 destinations unreported. 1,559
		St. Joseph 1,620 TOTAL C/L EQUIVALENTS 3,738

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